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A Manual of Debate. By RALPH W. THOMAS. New York: American Book Co., 1910. Pp. 224. \$0.80.

Mr. Thomas has admirably simplified in this college manual a subject that has of late suffered at the hands of the textbook-makers. He has clearly written his text for the guidance of the student, and not for the display of his own wide grasp of the curious minutiae and variants of the subject. He has realized that what can be most fruitfully taught is a norm of procedure—that once well grounded in this procedure the student can make his own departures from the norm according to his intellectual grasp of the needs of particular cases.

The book does, to be sure, fall into the inevitable error of the day in basing its discussion entirely upon economic and political questions. The result is that, while it simplifies its treatment in the matter of method, it remains at the complex extreme in the matter of subject. Our present education, with its obsequious eagerness to show to the world that it is practical, has grown ashamed of what is humbly fundamental, and o'erleapt itself with a good deal of hurraing into fields of ultimate application. Nowhere has it done this more fatally than in rushing boldly among these questions of public administration where the most angelic wisdom treads fearfully. There is, to be sure, a kind of specious simplicity and definiteness on the surface of political questions, and no doubt in actual practice most of them are decided by the juggling of these superficial values. But in reality, instead of being genuinely the simplest and most definite, they are the most complex, based, if the thinking involved is to be anything but the shallowest, upon the most subtle and far-reaching moral considerations. If education were intended to train men in the clever manipulation of the superficially definite values in these questions, then nothing could be better calculated to that end than just this type of forensic, just this dealing with ultimate questions before the fundamental moral principles upon which they are based are inculcated. These *are* ultimate questions, in the practical sphere. They require the most delicately trained minds to give them their right bearing. The result of turning them over to unformed minds, aside from the shallow treatment of the questions themselves, is to develop in the student a meretricious sophistication to political problems that is likely forever to prevent his just appreciation of them.

For all this Mr. Thomas is not to blame. He is only meeting a current demand. If he should have failed to meet it, his book would not have had its present chance to perform the genuine service of simplifying the method of procedure.

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